The Jews in Soviet Russia*

By Avrahm Yarmolinsky

THE fog of misinformation which for a decade hung over Russia obscured among other things the true status of the Jewish people under the Soviets. In our ignorance of the relevant facts, discussion of the subject has been marked by extreme and prejudiced statements. On the one hand, we have heard that the Revolution has been nothing but a blessing to Israel, that the Jews in the Soviet Union are more favorably situated than their co-religionists in any other country, that they are about to achieve an autonomous republic of their own. On the other hand, we have been told that the land of Lenin is a Gehenna for Jewry. The religionists have declared that all the advantages which the race may have won from the new régime are cancelled by the injury that it has done to the faith. The Zionists have been affronted by the official war on their party and on Hebraic culture, and view the land movement in Russia as a rival of the Palestinian enterprise. Both groups have been emphatic in their denunciation of every phase of Soviet Jewish policy.

Of late, sufficient trustworthy information has been coming out of Russia to permit a more rounded and dispassionate analysis of the condition of Jewry under the Soviets. Statistical data, reports of official investigators, unpublished memoranda submitted by field workers, accounts of reputable observers and unbiased news items have provided the material for such an analysis. On the basis of a study of all such available sources a comprehensive summary of the present situation of Russian Jewry will here be attempted. Various aspects of Jewish life will be considered—economic, political, social, cultural, religious—and an estimate made of the probable effect of the Soviet régime upon Jewry. While this essay is far from being the final word, it is at least the first serious attempt to draw up a fairly complete balance sheet of the gains and losses of the Jews resulting from the new order in Russia.

The first article will attempt a brief sketch of Russian Jewry on the eve of the war, and a survey of its experience from that time forward through the Revolution and the ensuing civil conflicts. It will then go on to a study of the economic impasse faced by the Jews after the Bolshevists assumed

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power, and of the roads of escape which presented themselves. It will conclude with a consideration of the movement which resulted in the formation of land settlements in White Russia, the Ukraine and the Crimea. The second article will take up the prospects of a Jewish state in Southern Russia, and possibly in the Far East, and will also deal with such questions as the Jewish Soviet, Jewish membership in the Communist Party, Zionism, anti-Semitism, the new kehillah, religion, education, the stage and other arts. Finally, there will be a forecast of future development, with special regard to nationalism, assimilation and the rivalry of Moscow and Jerusalem.

I

THE Jewish population of most western countries was built up by slow immigration, but Russia found herself suddenly possessed of a considerable Jewish community. The unwelcome gift came to her with the annexation of Polish territory under Catherine the Great. In the century and a half which followed, the severity of Russian policy toward Jewry varied slightly with the changes of rulers, but its constant and permanent effect was to brand the Jew with the psychology of an alien and an outcast.

On the eve of the war the situation of the Jew was such as to make that psychology dominant in his character. It has been aptly said that the Jews of Russia under the Czars spent their lives getting permission to do what the rest of the population did as a matter of course, and that the whole race was practically in the position of criminals under police surveillance. Throughout his life the Jew ran against numberless discriminatory laws. He was barred from Government service, including the postal, telegraph and railway systems. He could not teach in Government schools, serve as foreman of a jury, lead a military band, or obtain an army commission. Although Jewry furnished an abnormally high quota of conscripts, quarantine, frontier, navy and gendarmerie duty were forbidden to Jewish privates. The number of Jewish army doctors and nurses was limited. So was the number of Jewish students in secondary schools and colleges and even the number of synagogues. Indeed, only the general laxity and venality of officials made life endurable.

The Pale still existed at the opening of the war. Roughly speaking, Jews were allowed to reside only in the towns and townlets of the ten provinces of the so-called Kingdom of Poland and the fifteen western and southern governments (Lithuania, White Russia and the Ukraine). At the end of the nineteenth century, 94 per cent of Russian Jewry was confined to four per cent of the territory of Russia. The rest of the country was entirely closed to them or open to a few privileged groups only.

At the turn of the century, four out of every five Jews were townspeople

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and urbanization was on the increase. An inconsiderable fraction tilled the soil. There was a moneyed middle class of bankers, traders and manufacturers. Proportionately seven times as many Jews as non-Jews were in the liberal professions, despite the difficulty of obtaining an education. A wage-earning class (about 400,000 in 1900) was composed chiefly of artisans' helpers and workers in small shops. Working conditions approximated the evils of the sweatshop and the average wage in 1900 was twenty rubles (ten dollars) a month, nor had it increased by 1914. Heavy industry was closed to Jewish toilers, and the new industrial towns, since they were still classified as villages, were closed to Jewry.

In the main the Jews were a race of artisans and small traders. Toward the close of the nineteenth century they made up thirty-two per cent of those engaged in industry within the Pale, and seventy-seven per cent of the traders, although they were only twelve per cent of the total gainfully employed there. Practically every tailor and shoemaker, and many tanners, carpenters, hatters and weavers within the Pale were Jews. Many others kept shops.

Appalling poverty prevailed, and even when a prosperous era began for Russia as a whole in 1910, the legal discriminations nullified its effect on Jewry. Emigration was the chief way of escape from the overcrowded Pale: between 1881 and 1910 a total of 1,119,059 Jews emigrated to the United States, and in the year ending June 30, 1914, more than 100,000 made the venture.

A considerable portion of the people held to their old traditions: in the forlorn townlets they lived as their grandfathers had. They kept shops for the peasant trade and engaged in domestic manufactures. There was market twice a week and occasionally a fair. On Friday afternoon people assembled at the public bath. On *shabbas* all were in the synagogue, which was at once a house of prayer, a place of study and a meeting-hall. Life followed the ancient patterns, and the seasons brought the feasts and fasts with the same inescapable regularity with which they brought to the crooked, unpaved streets the sunshine of spring, the primordial mud of autumn, the deep snows of winter.

In the larger towns and cities worldly interests played a greater part. Emigration broadened the outlook of those who remained at home, and life began to take on a more secular tone. As the religious regimen was somewhat relaxed, lay education flourished. More children attended Government schools and Jewish secular schools where Russian was the language of instruction. Yet even here the dismal cheder, presided over by that sorry pedagogue the *melamed*, and the yeshivah held their own. So far were the masses removed from assimilation that in 1915 and 1916 only half the Jews of the country could speak Russian. Eighty per cent of the men and sixty-

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three per cent of the women could read Yiddish, while fifty-seven per cent could both read and write it.

The law took it for granted that every Jew was a member of a kehillah, the communal organization which administered charity and managed the religious and educational activities of the group. Funds for the kehillah's work was derived from an indirect tax levied by the State on kosher meat. Aid was lent by various private organizations, such as the Ort, the Society for the Spread of Education, the Society for the Promotion of Health Among the Jews, and the international I. C. A. The management of the kehillahs was for the most part in the hands of the rabbis and the rich Jews.

THE oppressive atmosphere in which Russian Jewry lived was threaded by a few vitalizing currents. Persecution, which occasionally took the form of bloody pogroms, served to strengthen the feeling of group solidarity and had assisted the birth of a new nationalism. At the end of the last century Zionism became a cultural force of great magnitude. It came to be identified with pietism, moderate liberalism, and the aspirations of the middle class. In 1907 the Zionist Party was declared illegal, but this did not put a quietus on its activities.

Besides the hope of Zion there was the dream of social revolution. As early as 1877 the first Jewish Socialist paper appeared, and in a dozen years the labor movement had come to the fore, with strikes and anti-Government demonstrations. Socialist propaganda in Yiddish fell on fertile soil, and in 1897 the General Jewish Workers' Union (Bund) of Russia, Poland and Lithuania was formed as an underground organization. The following year the Bund joined the new Russian Social-Democratic Party, but in 1903 it broke away. By 1906, when it had returned to the fold, it had 274 locals with 34,000 members. Nationalistic in its bias, the Bund stood for "national-cultural" autonomy, demanding that the dreamed-of revolutionary State limit its attention to economics and politics, leaving all cultural matters in the control of the constituent nationalities. Several minor groups stood midway between the Zionists and the Bund: the Poalei-Zion, the Zeirei-Zion, the Zionist-Socialists and others. The air was full of the winds of doctrine and the thunders of polemics, which exercised a secularizing, modernizing, but by no means denationalizing influence.

A Hebraic movement flourished, and Yiddish had strong radical support. New journals sprang up in both languages, while scholarship bore ample fruit. Unlike the Irish renaissance, the Jewish revival owed little to the theater, though for centuries there had existed a very crude folk drama. The Book of Esther, for example, was put on by yeshivah students and apprentices on Purim, whence the term *Purimspiel.* Toward the end of the seventies a regular Yiddish theater was opened in Odessa, but Yiddish plays

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were prohibited in 1883, and the drama never reached a high level. Imaginative writing, on the contrary, exhibited a fine vitality. A not inconsiderable body of neo-Hebrew and Yiddish works was produced. In the writings of Abramovich (Mendele Mocher Sforim), Sholom Aleichem, and their successors, are distilled the essences of Jewish life—its miseries and limitations, but also its coherence and wholeness, its religious tone, so inseparable from the healthy national instinct of the people.

II

WHEN the World War came, practically the whole of the Pale found itself in the military zone, and if the suffering of defenceless Jewry was not more intense than that of the Belgians, it was endured under more distressing conditions, for the Jews were deprived of the world's moral and material aid. Fighting on the Eastern front, where war was more brutal than elsewhere, meant unspeakable misery for non-combatants, as well as for soldiers, and particularly for Jews. To the havoc of war was added the suffering that came of the enmity of the military authorities, the civil government and the local population.

Although 300,000 Jews were serving under the Russian colors, the race was everywhere treated as a disloyal and dangerous element, an inner enemy. Attacks by the demoralized soldiery often assumed the dimensions of military pogroms. Nearly half a million Jews were forced for military reasons to abandon their homes, and evacuation was conducted in a brutal fashion. Many communities were wiped out. The destruction of property was appalling. Certain of the agricultural colonies were razed to the ground. Jewish industry and commerce were hard hit and, as an urban group, the race suffered more than the rest of the population, whose wealth was in the form of land. On the other hand, the partial abolition of the Pale in 1915 allowed some of the war refugees to seep into the hitherto forbidden interior, and distress was further mitigated by the heroic work of relief organizations.

When, at last, the empire fell, the crash reverberated in Jewish ears as though all the bells of freedom were ringing. With a stroke of the pen Kerensky's Provisional Government abolished the whole complicated network of anti-Jewish laws. The Jews felt that they could straighten their backs and look to the future without fear.

Like other newly liberated national groups, they began to prepare for a democratically elected national convention. Zionists looked on this as a stepping-stone to a World Congress which would obtain from the Entente control of Palestine. The Bund hoped to use it as a step toward cultural autonomy. In the South the Bund's plan of organizing Jewish communities for the administration of cultural affairs was temporarily tried. In the Ukraine, where the Bund had a voice in the anti-Bolshevist Kiev Govern-

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ment, Jewish autonomy existed for several months, but largely on paper. In Siberia nearly every Jewish community had a democratically elected kehillah board. A National Jewish Council, which had been formed by the Ural and West Siberian boards, was established at Irkutsk.

But before the national election took place, the Bolshevik Revolution broke out and wiped away these institutions. The first conference of the Jewish Communist sections and the Jewish commissariats, held in October, 1918, at Moscow, decided to abolish the kehillahs. On the seventh day of its existence the Soviet Government issued the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, proclaiming "the abolition of all national and national-religious privileges and restrictions." Despite this the régime did not meet with wide Jewish sympathy. The Socialist Party that spoke for the Jewish proletariat, that is, the revived Bund, was with the Menshevik opposition, for Jewish Socialists wanted a political, not a social revolution. Poland and Lithuania were under military occupation, and in those portions of Russia where the Bund functioned there were few young Jewish workingmen to speak out for Bolshevism. The masses of Jewish traders and handicraft workers feared the Communist experiment. The Bolsheviks offered land to the peasants and factories to the workers, but the Jews were neither peasants nor factory hands. They were largely traders, and the nationalization of private enterprises and the prohibition of free commerce cut the ground from under their feet. In small ways they could go on circumventing the new laws—they were used to evasions—but it soon became apparent that the traditional modes of livelihood of the great mass were destroyed.

Soon more horrible difficulties confronted Jewry. In the civil war precipitated by the Revolution, Jewry again found itself between the contending armies. The conflagration raged in the south and west: the greater number of Jews were in the south and west. It hit the cities hardest: the Jews were an overwhelmingly urban population. The horrors of this civil conflict outstripped even those of the seventeenth-century Cossack rising. It was the greatest disaster in the history of eastern Jewry. In the guerilla warfare the Jewish communities were delivered over to destruction. The horrors of counter-revolution turned the sympathies of Jewry to Bolshevism. Since the Whites identified Judaism with Bolshevism, the Reds came to consider anti-Semitism a token of counter-revolution, and the Jews, whatever their social status, clung to the Bolsheviks as their saviors.

The tragedy of those years has not yet been told in detail, but a few statistics are available. Between 1917 and 1921 there occurred 1,520 pogroms in 911 places within the Ukraine and White Russia, including Homel. One authority estimates the dead at between 90,000 and 100,000. Another doubles the figure, and estimates that there were 300,000 minors orphaned and that 70,000 people suffered property damages placed at billions

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of rubles. But figures can give no adequate idea of the disaster. To read one or two of the volumes of documentary material on the subject is an unforgettably painful experience. Their contents would hold a prominent place in that collection of cruelties with which Ivan Karamazov, in Dostoevsky's novel, desired to confront his God.

III

WHEN Russian Jewry emerged from the chaos of civil war in 1921, it found its position radically altered. What had been a fairly homogeneous group of some seven millions, living under one government, was now partitioned among half a dozen separate and mutually hostile states. One section was now within the borders of the new Poland. Much smaller segments became part of the population of Roumania, Lithuania, Latvia, Esthonia and Finland. What with the hostility of the new governments to each other, an already dispersed race found itself more disunited than ever.

The Jewish masses that remained within the Soviet Union lived in the main where they had always lived, in the southern and northwestern provinces. Under the new régime these provinces are known in the Union respectively as the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic and the White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic. The census of December, 1926, shows the Jewish population of the Ukraine to have been at that date 1,574,000 or 5.4 per cent of the total population of the republic, and the Jewish population of White Russia 407,025 or 8.2 per cent of the total population of that region. In both sections the Jews are a predominantly urban element.

But there are, besides, a considerable number of Jewish communities scattered over the vast territory of the Union lying outside these two regions. Already the abolition of the Pale of Settlement has had its effect, and some immigration into the formerly forbidden territory is taking place. In 1923 there were over 86,000 Jews in Moscow, as against a scant 5,000 in 1897, and in 1925 there were some 70,000 in Leningrad. The Jewish communities of other cities in the interior have also been growing apace. Considerable numbers are to be found in the towns of the Caucasus. According to the census of December, 1926, the Jewish population of the Union was then 2,600,000, or 1.8 per cent of the total population. The rate of natural increase is probably about 2 per cent per annum.

Within the old boundaries the population has shifted a good deal. During the pogrom period the few Jewish villagers fled for their lives to the townlets, and the more well-to-do inhabitants of these sought refuge in the larger towns. When public peace was restored, there set in a reverse movement from the larger to the smaller towns. A number of refugees did not return to their homes because they had no homes to go to. Everywhere

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starvation and epidemics had dealt more ruthlessly with the Jews than with others, mortality having increased in some places sevenfold.

The close of the civil war period found the economic position of the Jew somewhat improved. To be sure, the shutting down of war industries threw such Jews as were thus employed out of work, and demobilization of certain Government enterprises and reduction of Government staffs further swelled the ranks of the unemployed. But on the other hand, the Soviet in the spring of 1921 put into effect the New Economic Policy (Nep), under which commerce and industry as private undertakings became lawful once more. The smaller industrial plants that had been nationalized were returned to their former owners, and the Jewish small manufacturers gained a new lease on life. The business man gradually and cautiously crept out from underground.

But, generally speaking, economic recovery was slow. The purchasing power of the peasant, upon which the prosperity of the townlets depended, was not increasing at a sufficiently rapid rate. He was not consuming as much as heretofore, and he had learned to manufacture at home some of the products that he had formerly bought. Yet, except that conditions were harder, the Jews in the townlets continued to live and work as they had done for generations. The street that had been named for Alexander was now named for Lenin, but the harassed-looking men and the shrunken women who inhabited the tumble-down houses were the same. There was little, aside from an occasional confiscation of goods or a period of forced labor at something like road-mending, to make the townsmen realize that they were living under a régime of proletarian dictatorship.

The semblance of a commercial boom which here and there resulted from the New Economic Policy was short-lived. The Government again opened fire on private enterprise. By the end of 1923 the taxes imposed on private commercial and industrial establishments became ruinously high. In self-defense the small business men formed mergers. But taxes continued to rise, and these "trusts" went under. Such individually owned shops as have survived are pitifully small affairs, and their owners play a losing hand.

Not only the Government's taxation policy, but to an even greater extent the development of consumers' and producers' coöperatives fostered by the State is deadly to the small Jewish trader. The appearance of cooperative stores in the villages and the growth of coöperative marketing is depriving the town of its importance as a trading center, and thereby dooming it to extinction.

The merchant group, particularly the small fry, has, as a result, been steadily losing ground. They live wretchedly and without hope. One concern in a typical White Russian townlet, investigated in 1926, was asked

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to pay taxes and rent amounting to 11.02 rubles a month, about as much as the owner's family of three spent for food. The small shopkeepers in east and west Ukraine suffer from like conditions. Taxes are ruinous, especially to the small merchant, who keeps no books, and is therefore subject to arbitrary assessment. The larger shops are going out of business or shrinking, and the small ones dying by inches. Private stores do business only during the hours when the coöperative shops are closed, and then illegally. With the hand of the State so ruthless against them, the feeling among them is that they cannot hold out. Moreover, as a member of the odious bourgeoisie, the Jewish business man is discriminated against in other ways: he has to pay more for rent, as well as for public utilities; his children are the last ones to be admitted to school and are not allowed to join the Red Army, an invidious distinction which spirited youths naturally resent, and which carries with it a high exemption tax.

THE situation of the artisans has been relatively better than that of the trader. They have usually been able to keep their heads above water, and indeed form the aristocracy of the townlet. The proverb, *melocha is melucha* (a trade is a kingdom), was never truer than now. Formerly a merchant looked down upon an artisan. The situation is now reversed. The bootmaker, tailor or harness maker is fairly sure of his bread, especially if he has peasant customers. Some artisans work in villages all week, coming home for the Sabbath. Unofficial and semi-official investigations undertaken in 1926 showed that the artisans were economically the strongest element.

The improvement of the condition of these small producers is partly due to the fact that the Communist Party has taken them under its wing. At first the artisan was lumped with the exploiters of labor, and treated accordingly. Gradually, however, the absurdity of such an identification was borne in upon even the most hidebound Party members, and the artisans began to be regarded by the Bolsheviks as possible allies. The Communists, on their part, realize that State industries are incapable of supplying the country with the goods it requires, and have come to recognize that the artisan is likely to keep his place in the economic scheme for some time to come. At present artisans are in a class with the peasants, and the theory prevails that, like the rural masses, the artisans will reach socialism by way of coöperation. Artisans with one journeyman or two apprentices are almost on the same footing with wage-earners. Like the latter, they have the vote and their societies, analogous to trade unions, offering their members legal and medical help and some educational facilities. They also establish nurseries, clubs and, in some cases, loan societies. The artisans' unions, moreover, have been given representation on the taxation commissions.

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There is still, however, a great deal of unemployment, and, what with inferior training and poor equipment, many Jewish artisans go under. Besides, the interests, real or fancied, of State industry are paramount, and where they require the crushing of the small manufacturer, he is made short shrift of. No less an authority than the Vice-President of the Union Planning Commission (*Gosplan*) has classed the needle-trades with the private industries whose further growth is undesirable, and the leather craft with those which the development of State industry has rendered superfluous. Now both needle work and leather work are traditionally Jewish occupations and the government attitude toward them will cause much hardship to Jewish small manufacturers. In some lines the Jewish small producer working for the market has to compete, on the one hand, with mass production of the State industry in the better grades of goods, and on the other hand with peasants who, in their winter leisure, manufacture articles of poor quality but low price. His outlook is, therefore, not bright.

It hardly needs saying that the restrictions imposed upon private commerce and industry are not directed against any racial or national group, but are a matter of general economic policy. If the Government holds to its course, and there is every reason to expect that it will, the days of the private business man, particularly the merchant, to a less extent the artisan, are numbered. What this means to the Jews may be gauged from the fact that in 1924 the traders and small producers constituted three-fourths of the Jewish population. A report submitted to the Conference of Jewish Sections of the White Russian Communist Party in 1925 estimated the productive elements among the Jews of the Union, that is, the farmers, wage-earners, employees, artisans and professionals, at some 1,700,000, the remaining million consisting of Nepmen, the new bourgeoisie, living mostly in the cities, the traders, most numerous in the townlets, and the large *déclassé* and parasitic group having no definite occupation. A year later the productive portion of Soviet Jewry had grown to two million, and the unproductive portion decreased correspondingly.

These figures, given out by the Jewish Communists, are perhaps too optimistic. Economically, Russian Jewry is undoubtedly ill-adjusted to a system based upon large scale State industry, State commerce and coöperatives. The incontrovertible fact is that the workings of this system tend to deprive a considerable proportion of Jews, particularly in the smaller towns, of their scanty livelihood. At the same time the drastic restriction of immigration to the United States, practically closing the country to East European Jewry, blocks the outlet which used to drain off a large portion of the Jewish surplus in Russia. Under these circumstances, an occupational realignment becomes a matter of life and death.

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IV

FROM the beginning of the Revolution the younger and better-educated element took advantage of the opportunity to enter the field of Government service, newly-open to the Jew since the Revolution. Many non-Jewish intellectuals declined at first to serve in Soviet offices, and the old-time bureaucrats were undesirable. The Jews, therefore, filled many positions. This work, however, demands rather high qualifications, and the staffs are being constantly cut down for reasons of economy. Moreover, for the last three or four years there has been a tendency to man the Government, as far as possible, with a local staff speaking the local language, so that the Jewish clerks are hard put to it to keep their places.

A more accessible field for the Jewish masses is that of factory work. The transformation of middlemen and artisans into industrial wage-earners is, indeed, the heart's desire of the Communists. Communist leadership has striven from the beginning against great odds to further this process. Entry of the Jews into industry is very difficult since industry in the Soviet Union is developing slowly, and there is scarcely enough for the old hands to do. Moreover, eastern Ukraine, where most of the mines and factories are, was never a Jewish center, and what with residential disabilities, Jews in former days were practically unknown as workers in heavy industry. The result is that when an opening presents itself, the place is at once filled by a non-Jew accustomed to the job. Besides, the Jew is likely to retreat from work that throws him into close contact with men not of his own race and habits.

Nevertheless, the wage-earning group, recruited chiefly from the artisan class, has been on the increase. At the same time there has been a substantial decrease of the Jewish contingent in the tailor shops and tanneries, which thirty years ago employed half the Jewish industrial workers. The Communists note with satisfaction that already the majority of the Jews are employed in State and coöperative enterprises, and also that the increase of manual workers among them outstrips the increase of brain workers. At the end of 1926 the Jewish wage-earners numbered 400,000, making, with their dependents, a proletariat of 1,000,000.

ANOTHER way out of the impasse in which Russian Jewry finds itself is agriculture. It is a rough and unfamiliar road, but people are driven by hard necessity to take it. Men and women are leaving the dying townlets, and the cities haunted by unemployment, and determinedly turning their faces to the land.

There have been Jewish farmers in Russia for 121 years. Their settlements came into being thanks to the initiative of a paternalistic Czar (Alexander I) who wanted to wean the Jews from their customary occupations

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and set them to tilling the soil. The first four colonies were planted in 1807 on the patch of virgin steppe between the river Inguletz and the Dnieper, into which it flows. Within the next fifty years the numbers of these settlers were swelled by three successive waves of immigration, despite the fact that the immigrants faced strange, hard, unrewarding work, under brutal and corrupt task-masters.

Under Alexander II the Government ceased to encourage Jewish farming. Crown land was no longer allotted for the purpose, and even settlement on private land was hedged about with limitations. Yet the number of colonists grew, partly with the assistance of Jewish public organizations. The census of 1897 disclosed the fact that 2.9 per cent of all the gainfully employed persons of Jewish faith were engaged in agricultural pursuits, the entire Jewish agricultural population being over 190,000. Half of this population lived in the colonies, of which there were some 300 at the end of the century.

Soon after the Bolshevik Revolution, the idea of fostering Jewish agriculture took hold of the minds of the Communist leaders. Lenin himself favored the notion, as did the Central Committee of the Communist Party. It seemed the most desirable way out of the economic blind alley into which the Revolution had driven the Jewish people. In 1919 the Government called upon the poorer classes of the people to form farming groups without delay, and promised to clear the way for them to the new occupation. As far as government encouragement went, the matter rested there. Civil war necessitated the temporary abandonment of all plans for peaceful reconstruction. Yet even without the pilotage of the State, and in the face of all but insuperable difficulties, the plan slowly made headway.

In the first years after the Revolution a spontaneous, unorganized forward-to-the-land movement, unassisted save by the Ort, had arisen in the distressed Jewish communities. In the beginning the peasants, appropriating the gentry's land, would in some instances urge the Jews to take part in the seizure. Not being sure that they were acting within the law, they wanted their Jewish neighbors to share the responsibility. In due time the State took a hand in the distribution of land, and plots were given over "in perpetual toiling usage" to all those ready to spend their own labor upon them. Prodded by want, the Jews seized the opportunity offered by the new agrarian policy and laid claim to a share of the nationalized land. Taking to the plow in the hard years of civil war and military Communism, they held on to their parcels with their teeth. Often the Jewish claimant was confronted with scepticism and even with hostility on the part of local land committees. Further, those who got a patch of earth to till did not know how to go about it, and generally did not have either the implements or the cattle with which to work. What they did have was a natural tenacity

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and resourcefulness and the energy of despair. And so, in the face of enormous difficulties, a few gained a foothold on the soil.

Despite the fact that the civil war ravaged both the old colonies and such new settlements as were attempted, they recuperated rapidly, largely owing to the financial assistance of the Jewish Colonization Society and the American Joint Distribution Committee. The colonists clung to the settlements. As early as 1920 they had begun to return to their fields and to reassert claims to their plots, some of which had been nationalized, others occupied by the local peasantry. It has been estimated that in 1923 the Jewish farming population of the Union was nearly 76,000, as against some 53,000 in 1913 in the same territory.

In many small towns in White Russia and the Ukraine a considerable number of artisans and small traders led an amphibious economic existence. In addition to their trade, they tilled small patches of land situated within or near the town limits, which they could work without pulling up stakes. In the dying Jewish townlets a vegetable patch, a cow, and sometimes a horse, was all that stood between many a family and starvation. But as the number of families taking up farming in a small way continued to grow, land situated near the towns and available for Jewish settlers became in due time exceedingly scarce. It was then that the prospective farmers set out for the south, where free land was still to be had for the asking.

V

IN the summer of 1924, the State was finally in a position to take a hand in the matter of Jewish colonization. In July the Praesidium of the Central Executive Committee of the White Russian Soviet Republic decreed that "in distributing the free land . . . the requests of Jews, whether as individuals or groups, and irrespective of whether they had previously engaged in farming, should be honored equally with the requests of the local agricultural population." Four days later a similar measure was enacted in the Ukraine. A month later, that is, in August, 1924, a committee on the land settlement of Jews, known as the Komzet (a word formed by the initials of its Russian name), and functioning under the Council of Nationalities, was appointed by the central Government of the Union. An auxiliary society, in the nature of a private organization, known as the Ozet, came into being a year later. The Ozet's chief function is to raise funds at home for the work.

In August, 1924, there were 17,198 families tilling 156,115 desyatins.* At the end of the third year of the Komzet's activity, the agricultural population had increased twofold, making a total of 33,357 families (165,000 souls), and the holdings had increased almost threefold in area, reaching an aggregate of 452,032 desyatins. Thus, more than 16,000 families were

*One desyatin equals 2.7 acres.

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settled on 296,000 desyatins granted by the State. At this rate, it will take less than twenty years for the Komzet to carry out its program of settling one hundred thousand families on the land. It may be noted that the Jewish farming population of Palestine is only 32,000, after half a century's efforts at colonization.

Like other settlers, the Jews get the land free, a family retaining its holding as long as a single member continues to work it. Besides the land for tilling, the State grants the settlers free tracts of timber land, from which lumber may be obtained for building purposes, and some credits, from 300 to 500 rubles per family, for water supply and the purchase of implements and seeds. In addition, the settlers are allowed reduced transportation rates and are exempt from taxes and from military duty for the first three years. The cost incident to installing a family on the land in the south has risen from $600–$750 to $800–$1,000. It is less in the north. Naturally, the State in its present impoverished condition is not able to bear the full burden of these expenses. And, of course, the prospective farmers on their part are not in a position to contribute a substantial portion of the costs out of their own pockets. Perhaps eighty-five per cent of the settlers are recruited from among the petty traders, for whom there is no room in the present economic scheme, from the artisan class, and from among those whom ill fortune has left without a definite occupation. In this situation the assistance of foreign relief organizations has been a godsend.*

Among these organizations are the Jewish Colonization Association (I. C. A.) of London and Paris, the Berlin Ort, and several minor societies in the Americas and Great Britain. The foreign organization that counts most is the Agro-Joint (Joint Agricultural Corporation of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee). Up to January 1, 1927, this agency did about three fourths of the work since the Government first took a hand in settling the Jews on the land. Of the 13,656,000 rubles spent on the settlers up to August, 1927, the Agro-Joint contributed 7,349,000 rubles. The share of the I. C. A. and the Ort together amounted to a little over a million rubles. The rest of the credits came from the Government Treasury and from banks and other domestic sources. These sums do not include the moneys invested by the settlers, the value of the building materials contributed by the

* An excellent description of life in the southern colonies was given by Louis Fischer in his Moscow letter in THE MENORAH JOURNAL of April, 1928. Other letters and articles in THE MENORAH JOURNAL during the past few years cast light on diverse aspects of the Russian situation. Among the most interesting are: "Under the Soviet Régime" by Louis Fischer (Feb., 1924); "'Bourgwis' and Communist Jews" by Henry G. Alsberg (April, 1924); "In Proletarian Russia" by Uriah Z. Engelman (Nov.–Dec., 1924); "Forward to the Soil" by Louis Fischer (April, 1925); "A Russian Goes Home" by Maurice G. Hindus (June, 1925); "Is Russian Jewry Doomed?" by Maurice G. Hindus (Oct., 1925); "Ukrimean Progress" by Louis Fischer (June–July, 1926); "The New Spirit in Russia" by Maurice G. Hindus (Feb., 1927); "A Ukrainian Family" by Rachel Feigenberg (Feb., 1928); and "The Moscow Jewish State Theater" by Louis Lozowick (May, 1928).

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Government, the reduction on fares, and, above all, the value of the land, which is estimated at from fifty to seventy-five million dollars.

No one who has seen anything of the experiment is deceived into thinking that the settlers are living a bucolic idyll. Quite the contrary. Most of these men and women are unused to the demands of heavy and sustained physical labor. They are exhausted by long privation. They have to accustom themselves to phlegmatic and unfathomable oxen, to complicated machinery, and to other perplexing elements of a totally unfamiliar environment. They subsist on food which is still in a large measure inadequate. They are harried by shortages of all kinds. Sanitation is generally poor, and medical help wanting. There is a scarcity of schools which threatens with illiteracy a people to whom book learning is the bread of life. Born individualists, they have to adjust themselves to teamwork. The resultant strain upon body and mind is severe.

Once land has been granted by the Komzet to a voluntary group of settlers, a working squad, composed of one or two able-bodied members of each family, arrives on the spot, usually with some horses and tools. Provided by the Agro-Joint (or one of the other organizations) with additional implements, seed grain, and lumber for a temporary shelter, they go to work. In the Spring, if there are barracks to house them, the rest of the group come out. The Agro-Joint supplies loans in kind or funds for the purchase of live stock, implements, and for the establishment of creameries, tanneries and mills. It financed the construction of seventy-seven per cent of all the houses built by the settlers previous to January 1, 1927.

Funds disbursed by the Agro-Joint are in the nature of loans; its attitude is the very opposite of philanthropic or paternalistic. Its only free gift to the settlers is agricultural instruction. For this it maintains a staff of teachers who live with the settlers and are in every respect their mentors, guides and friends.

THE colonization movement centers in three areas: White Russia, the Ukraine, and the Crimea. In White Russia the effect of the forward-to-the-land movement was quickly felt. By August, 1927, some 9,000 Jewish families were cultivating an area of nearly 59,000 desyatins, an increase of more than 2,200 families since the establishment of the Komzet. The one circumstance that favors the development of the White Russian colonies is that the cost of settling is almost half of what it is in the south: water and timber are plentiful, the soil is easy to work, and the cost of transportation is low. But free land in this region is scarce, so that the holdings are small. The other serious drawback is that the settlements are scattered, and as a result the cultural and social opportunities are limited.

The Jewish colonies in south Ukraine, however, are placed close to-

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gether on continuous tracts of territory and here is held out hope of a Jewish communal existence, of a Jewish school, a house of prayer and a Jewish way of living. Here are now located nearly two-thirds of the Jewish farming population, and over two-thirds of the tilled area. About two-fifths of the land is held by thirty-six pre-war colonies. The land grants made since 1924 total 145,000 desyatins. New villages to the number of 113 have grown up, and twenty-six more are being laid out. A third important center is in the north of the Crimean Peninsula, which forms an autonomous republic within the R. S. F. S. R. Here it is possible to travel from Theodosia to Eupatoria, a distance of 130 miles, without leaving, except for insignificant stretches, the territory of the Jewish villages.

Both in the Ukraine and in the Crimea, unlike White Russia, the tendency is against communal farming. As soon as the new farmers are more or less established, as soon as the individual families have a roof over their heads and have begun to acquire some possessions, the collectives break into smaller artels or go to pieces completely. Yet even those settlers who hold the land individually do some of the work coöperatively. The Government encourages the simplest forms of collectivism, such as associations for the common use of farm machinery, and all kinds of coöperatives.

The outlook for the land movement is hopeful. Already some settlements are self-supporting, and it is probable that the rest will be so within five years. The colonists seem to possess the required qualities of endurance and courage. So large is the number of would-be settlers that only a fraction of them can now be accommodated. Already some hundreds of desyatins have been set aside for Jewish farmers in the Great Russian provinces of Pskov and Smolensk, and thousands of desyatins in the northern Caucasus, as well as in Uzbekistan in Central Asia. Another large land grant in the Far East has just been made. This project will be discussed in the next article. A plan to float a ten million dollar loan to finance future operations is under way, and it is hoped that as time goes on the enterprise will be decreasingly dependent on foreign aid. The enterprise thus far, at any rate, has aroused great expectations and high enthusiasm, and practically all factions in Russia commend it. The temper of the movement at present is well expressed by the very names of the new villages: Avodah, Charus, Kadimo, Novaya Zhizn—Work, Freedom, Forward, New Life.

Mr. Yarmolinsky's second article will appear in the July MENORAH JOURNAL.

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The Jews in Soviet Russia—II *

By Avrahm Yarmolinsky

THE Bolshevik Revolution has emancipated the Jews as individuals, and—what is much more—as a group capable of developing a full national life. To this extent it has been a twofold gain, greater perhaps than the gain of the French Revolution to West European Jewry. On the other hand, Communist policy toward private industrial and commercial enterprise has cut the ground from under the feet of the large mass of Russian Jewry, traditionally engaged in small-scale business, either as manufacturers or merchants. As a result, occupational realignment is taking place. The educated find employment in the Government service, newly opened to Jews, while some of the untrained workers are absorbed by the State factories. Furthermore, the condition of the artisan, recently taken under the wing of the Communist Party, is showing signs of improvement. These trends, however, have not eliminated wholly the economic woes of Russian Jewry.

The brightest spot in the picture is the settlement of large masses of Jews on the land in White Russia, the Ukraine and the Crimea. The success of this enterprise, which was described in the previous article, seems assured: already many of the colonies are self-supporting and increasing numbers of Jews are applying for land.

Further growth of the agricultural movement among Soviet Jewry depends largely on the amount of land available for colonization. The main land reserves of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics are in Asia, and the larger colonization schemes center there. The Government of Nicholas I once toyed with the project of shifting a portion of the Jewish population to Siberia, and the plan has lately been revived by the Soviet Government. By act of March 28, 1928, the Praesidium of the Executive Committee of the Union set aside for Jewish colonization free land in Bira-Bidzhan (part of Bureya) in the Far East. This region occupies the southeast corner of Amur Province, just north of China and west of the Pacific Ocean. The

* This is the concluding portion of the first effort to draw up a comprehensive balance sheet of the gains and losses of Russian Jewry through the Bolshevik Revolution. Dr. Yarmolinsky's first article, in the June Menorah Journal, surveyed briefly the conditions under which Russian Jewry existed before, during and after the war, and analyzed the effects of Soviet economic policy on Jewry and the attempted solutions of resulting economic problems. These two articles are condensed versions of part of Dr. Yarmolinsky's forthcoming book, *The Jews and Other Minor Nationalities in Russia* (Vanguard Press).—Eds.

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territory is somewhat larger than Palestine and just about the size of Vermont, but its population is under 30,000—mostly recent settlers without historic claim to the land. It can support 250,000 people, and is near the excellent port of Vladivostok. It is fine country for agriculture and cattle-breeding, rich in forests and with some mineral resources, and close to the railway and chief markets of the Far East. On the other hand, it is at present an untamed wilderness, in places the soil must be reclaimed, the winters are severe, and there are dangerous summer floods.

The Komzet (Government Committee for the Settlement of Working Jews on the Land) has already issued instructions regarding the preliminary steps to be taken in colonizing the Bira-Bidzhan territory. The enthusiasm for the project among Russian Jews is considerable, especially among the youth. This year it is intended to settle 500–600 families and to spend 1,400,000 roubles, which the Government is furnishing, on land improvement, road building, and house construction. At present it seems that the work will have to be carried on without any foreign aid. The pioneering task will be a test of the hardihood and perseverance of the race.*

Fortunately, enough land remains available nearer home than eastern Asia to permit additional Jewish colonization in European Russia on a sufficiently generous scale to ease if not completely to solve the problems of the people. In White Russia the hope of the settlers lies in the reclamation of the abundant swamp land. In the Ukraine, too, some further acreage is open to Jewish settlers. This year a new grant of 20,000 hectares has been made. The region has, however, the disadvantage that the rural population is a nationally homogeneous group, so that the Jewish villages are like tiny islands in a Ukrainian sea. There is no such overwhelming native majority in the Crimea. The peninsula presents a kind of ethnic patchwork, and where there are enough national groups to make a Babel, the position of the Jewish minority is less precarious. Besides, there is more land to be had in the Crimea. It has been lying idle for generations because of the scarcity of water. To get water it is necessary to dig deep wells. In the Eupatoria-Jankoy districts are large tracts of free land, as much as 200,000 desyatins, not needed by the local population. The Azov Sea links this territory to the so-called Azov flatlands on the east. Last summer a Government commission surveyed the flatlands with a view to the possibility of draining them. It is believed that if there were sufficient capital to reclaim them, they could easily sustain, along with the Eupatoria-Jankoy districts, as many as half a million people.

* According to a Moscow news dispatch received as this article goes to press, the territory available to Jewish settlers in the Far East has been increased to 3,895,000 hectares, so that it now stretches on both sides of the Ussuri railway. The new area is rich in cedar forests. The dispatch said that 640 pioneers are now settled in Bira-Bidzhan, that tractors and ploughs have begun to arrive from America, and that cultivation of rice will begin in a few weeks.

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II

AS soon as the land movement results in a Jewish majority on a sufficiently extensive stretch of territory, the formation of an autonomous Jewish republic—the first Jewish State since the Dispersion—will be well within the realm of possibility. Statements to this effect have been made more than once, both officially and unofficially. The president of the Komzet is reported to have remarked that should the settlements in and around the Crimea grow at the present rate, the Azov Sea would have to be renamed the Jewish Sea. He might have added that if the Crimea-Azov development should materialize, what amounts to a Jewish province would exist in a land which was the seat of prosperous Jewish communities in the ancient world. In the first centuries of the Christian era Hellenized Jews from Asia Minor established themselves in the kingdom which straddled the Cimmerian Bosporus (now the Straits of Kerch). By a curious coincidence, that Greco-Scythian soil which faintly remembers a Jewish past may come to nourish a Jewish future.

That the Soviet officials are earnest when they speak of a Jewish State is evidenced in the decree setting aside the Bira-Bidzhan region for Jewish colonization. This declares that "should the colonization of the region proceed successfully, the possibility of developing it into a Jewish national administrative unit ought to be kept in view."

But though the matter of Jewish autonomy is taken seriously, it is rather a distant goal than a question of immediate practical import. The conference of the Jewish Sections of the Communist Party, which took place in December, 1926, expressed its belief in the possibility and the desirability of the consolidation of the Jewish masses into a nation with a territory of its own. It subordinated this matter, however, to its fundamental and paramount purpose, which is the achievement of the new social order. The Communists regard Jewish territorial autonomy as a means of serving the "current interests" of the Bolshevik Revolution, as a milestone on the road to Communism to be traveled by the Jewish masses.

It is agreed on all sides that the Jewish republic would prove no more than a partial solution of the problem of the Jewish minority, since the autonomous territory—or territories—could not possibly include all the Jewish communities of the Union. As it is part of the Soviet policy to safeguard the rights of a given minority by allowing it to administer its own affairs in its own language, strictly within the Soviet law, the Jews, as well as other peoples, have their own soviets in the towns and villages where they are in the majority. Jewish soviets have been formed in the Crimea as well as in White Russia. Indeed, they exist wherever there is a considerable Jewish group. On April 1, 1927, there were 115 local Jewish soviets, both

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rural and semi-urban, and one Jewish *raion* (regional) soviet in the Kherson district. Late in May, 1928, the National Minorities Committee of the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee decided to establish a new Jewish administrative region and soviet in the Krivoy Rog colonies. Delegates to the Kalinindorf soviet come from seven rural soviets, six of which are Jewish. One of these, as well as the local post office, is named for Sholom Aleichem. There is a Jewish police commissioner with a force of three men at his command, not to mention a ramshackle two-room jail.

The administrative machinery of the new Jewish soviets creaks, but does its work. The townlet soviets in particular have proved their efficiency. Practically all transactions, both oral and written, are in Yiddish: it is the language of the sessions, of all documents and of correspondence. In some cases, the soviets use Yiddish in their communications to other Government agencies, so that the executive committees of some non-Jewish regional soviets have to maintain a special department to handle Jewish business. There are also a number of lower courts where the business is conducted entirely in Yiddish. In the Ukraine and White Russia the law entitles all parties to a trial to use their native tongue in the court room. In some of the larger cities, as for example Kiev and Odessa, there are station houses where a man can file a complaint in Yiddish, and have it written down in the same language by a Jewish policeman. Likewise marriages, births and deaths may be registered at the Government Bureau of Records in Yiddish. An inscription in Yiddish appears for the first time in history on the coat of arms of a State, namely, on that of the White Russian Republic. All the more important legislative acts of this republic are published in four languages, including Yiddish. As a matter of principle, Yiddish is the language in which Jewish children get their schooling.

A mere fraction of the Jewish population, however, (a little over 10 per cent in the Ukraine), elects its own soviets. As regards administration, the rest is indistinguishable from the non-Jewish citizenry. It goes without saying that the Jewish wage-earners, employees and professionals enjoy the full measure of civic and political rights, including suffrage. Owing to the efforts of the Jewish Communists, the artisans and even the poorer element among the middlemen have also been granted the vote. The settlers, too, irrespective of their previous occupations, are full-fledged citizens. Alone the Jewish middle class, like the new bourgeoisie generally, since it is, so to speak, beyond the pale of the Soviet State, has no political rights.

The interests of the Jewish masses are not without representation in the higher Government departments but, being still a minority without organized territory of their own, they have no seats in the Council of Nationalities as yet. The delegation to this Council from White Russia does include a Jew, but that from the Ukraine does not.

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III

THERE has been a considerable penetration of the ranks of Jewry by Communism, and Jewry in turn has come to wield a considerable power in the Communist Party. At the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution there were groups of active Jewish Communists in Great Russia, chiefly in Moscow and Petrograd (now Leningrad). On March 7, 1918, there appeared in Leningrad the initial issue of the first Yiddish Communist newspaper. In the Ukraine, too, there were groups of Jewish workers with Bolshevist sympathies as early as January, 1918, but the majority followed the leadership of the Bund and the United Jewish Socialist Party, both ranged against the party that had seized power. On the eve of Denikin's occupation of Kiev (August, 1919), the Communist wing of the Bund, together with that of the United Jewish Socialist Party, merged with the Communist Party of the Ukraine. In Great Russia the process of the Bund's disintegration was slower, and it was not until April, 1921, that its left wing joined the Communist Party. As its right wing was outlawed, many of its leaders, like other Mensheviks, emigrated. By the end of the civil war the Jewish Sections of the Communist Party, where the former Bundists had found their place, were left in sole possession of the Jewish political field.

Since the new order in Russia is based on the dictatorship of the proletariat (in effect, the rule of the Communist Party), such Jewish leadership as functions prominently at present is Communist. Within the Party there has been, since 1918, a network of so-called Jewish Sections, just as there are agencies in charge of work among other national minorities. They do not constitute an independent organization like the old Bund, nor do they include all the Jews in the Party. They are part of the general machinery of propaganda, the membership consisting of men and women assigned to carry out the decisions of the Party which particularly concern the Jewish masses. In practice, the Jewish Sections are to a certain extent free to act on their own initiative. They have the decisive voice in Jewish affairs. That their work has been in no small measure successful is indicated by the fact that the majority of the Jewish people, like most of the non-Jews, are now inclined to accept the existing régime. The Government is no longer the alien, hostile power that it used to be. An index to the changed attitude of the Jews is the fact that they do not evade military duty, as was their wont in the old days when the army was a place of horror.

The several public bodies concerned with Jewish affairs, membership in which is open to all, whether Communists or not, are under Communist control. One of them is the Ozet, which is promoting the Jewish land movement. The Communists are also in complete control of the Ort which,

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roughly speaking, stands in the same relation to the artisans as the Ozet does to the settlers. The Culture League (*Kultlig*), which fosters the arts through libraries, studios, theaters and concerts, and which is a publishing agency as well, is also dominated by the ideas and ideals of the Communist Party.

The Communist rule among the Jews is the rule of a well-organized and purposeful minority. The members of the race who belong to the Party have been growing in number, although not as rapidly as the general membership of the Party. From 1922 to 1926 this increased 188 per cent, while the Jewish membership increased only 142 per cent. On October 1, 1926, the Communist Party of the Union counted over 47,000 Jewish members and candidates. The Jewish membership of the Communist Union of Youth, which includes young people between fourteen and twenty-three, was 100,000 (December, 1926) and of the Pioneers, a sort of Bolshevik Boy and Girl Scout Organization, 125,000 (July, 1926).

The Zionists have been driven underground. On occasion their members are imprisoned and exiled to Siberia and other distant parts. The Zionist Party is suppressed as a reactionary and counter-revolutionary organization, diverting the attention of the Jewish masses from the realities of the class struggle to a nationalistic chimera. As Palestine is under British mandate, the break with England has given the repressive measures against the Zionists an added excuse. The latter have been held up to scorn as playing into the hands of the British imperialists. Alone, the left wing of the Poalei-Zion, which is known as the Jewish Communist Party, and which subscribes to the tenets of the Third International, is allowed to work in the open. Then, too, a measure of freedom is enjoyed by the Russian branch of the international Hechalutz (Pioneers), which conducts industrial and agricultural enterprises to train Palestinian colonists, and is allowed to publish a paper of its own in Moscow.*

The Jewish Leninites have no patience with the notion of withdrawing to an historic homeland. The Russian Jew's real homeland, the Communist argues, is the country in which he has lived, however wretchedly, for centuries, and which it is now his task to reshape according to a new ideal. The official attitude, which is based on this theory, is a friendly one, the Jews being invited to share in the Bolshevist enterprise as full equals. This does not mean, however, that all the inhabitants of the Soviet Union are innocent of anti-Jewish sentiments. Anti-Semitism, so long a tradition and a policy in Russia, has survived in a peculiar form the social Revolution. Since the institution of the New Economic Policy there has been a recrudescence of it, and in some circles it has even waxed stronger than under the old

* It was recently reported that the Hechalutz was abolished by the Soviet authorities after almost a decade of activity, on the grounds that its members were engaged in counter-revolution.

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régime. The ancient prejudice makes itself felt in many ways. The old charges are taking new shapes: the Jews are nepmen (private traders); the Jews have invaded the capital and have caused a housing shortage; the Jews are being granted the choicest land. Anti-Semitism crops up in the most unlikely places, such as in the Communist Party itself and even in the Communist Union of Youth, whose young members have grown up under the new dispensation and have presumably been imbued with ideas diametrically opposed to racial antagonisms. That a warning had to be issued against exploiting anti-Jewish sentiment in the factional struggle that was raging within the Party is significant. At the conference of the White Russian Communist Party in December, 1927, it was frankly admitted that the anti-Jewish feeling was growing among the working people throughout White Russia.

In the regions where the Jews are settled on the land the local population, feeling itself cheated out of potential possession, naturally looks with a jaundiced eye upon the newcomers. The animosity against the Jews is strongest among the well-to-do Ukrainian peasants and the German colonists whose prospects of enlarging their holdings are most directly affected. The settlers accept the situation with equanimity: it is by no means new to them, nor is it severe. Up to a certain point they have succeeded in establishing friendly relations with their non-Jewish neighbors. As a Jewish woman observed to an American journalist: where Jew and Gentile look to the same sky for rain, prejudice is not likely to be strong.

Indeed, there is no lack of signs pointing to a new spirit of tolerance and good will. Ten per cent of the membership of the Ozet is made up of non-Jews, some of them Cossacks. If we are to believe the chairman of the Kalinindorf regional soviet, the native peasantry there is satisfied with the Jewish administration, and there is harmony between the Jewish majority and the Ukrainian minority. The fact that the Jews are taking up farming and entering the factories and mills robs of its point the old argument that the race is a parasitic element always dodging heavy, honest work. Another factor that tends to break down popular prejudice is the attitude of the Government. The Jews are treated by the State as citizens on a par with the rest of the community, and such discriminations as are made are not made on the basis of nationality. Indeed, no Government is doing so much to combat the more patent forms of anti-Semitism as the Soviet Government. Anti-Jewish propaganda is regarded as criminal, and its perpetrators are severely punished. The Government is still engaged in meting out justice to the pogrom-makers of a decade ago. Despite all unfavorable phenomena, it is undeniable that the Jews at last begin to feel that they have firm ground under their feet in a country which they can call their own.

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IV

THE new régime laid violent hands on the economic foundations of Jewish existence and changed the face of its group life. The cultural pattern could not but be affected also, although, being more stable, in lesser degree. Among the Jews, as among other groups, the great social dislocation played havoc with religious institutions and made for a decline of devotional observance. The Revolution brushed aside venerable taboos, tore holes in immemorial customs, and sowed the seeds of new values. Thus it accelerated that decay of old traditions which had begun before the war.

When the Revolution reached Homel (White Russia) in 1919 it emptied the thirty synagogues, brought the students out of the yeshivah, and transformed the cheders into secular schools. Official action compelled many of the changes, but many more were spontaneous acts, as when the yeshivah students joined the Communist Union of Youth and the Communist Party. Events during the early years followed the same course in forlorn townlets and on the land as well as in cities. The synagogue square remained a communal meeting place, but the sacred structures took on a deserted look. The study of the Torah fell upon evil days, since the religious schools had collapsed, and the rabbinate had been forced to turn to lay pursuits to eke out a living. The reception rooms of the Chassidic holy men were empty, and their arbitrament was unsought. Sons no longer said kaddish over their deceased parents. Young and old smoked and worked on the Sabbath, and on Friday night one could see a man eating the forbidden flesh of the pig at a table lit by the traditional candles and decorated with the tall Sabbath loaf. On Passover leavened bread was eaten. Except for circumcision and the marriage rite, all observances seemed to have fallen into abeyance.

In the agricultural settlements, where the Jews live by themselves and where the assimilationist influences are less operative than elsewhere, the nature of the work itself tends to break down the old ways of living, which are better suited to the artisan's or the shopkeeper's occupation than to the farmer's. Saturday is the day of rest, when even the local Soviet offices are closed, but the day is no longer observed with the old rigor. One finds a pious Jewish woman lighting the candles on a Sabbath eve and then going out, in violation of the sanctity of the hour, to milk the cow.

From the first, the Jewish Bolsheviks, in furtherance of the anti-religious program of the Communist Party, adopted a violently hostile policy toward Judaism as a creed. While their Russian confrères assault a peasant heaven, they declare war on the God of the Ghettos, in the name of materialism and science. The prescriptions of Mosaic law are disregarded. Thoroughgoing Jewish Communists do not circumcize their male children. In a public

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debate held in Odessa the Communist spokesman maintained that the "barbaric survival" should be abandoned.

An active anti-religious propaganda got under way. On the awful Day of Atonement, when even the fish, as the phrase goes, tremble in the sea, groups of young people appeared on the synagogue square with a brass band and made speeches denouncing the rabbis and Jehovah. At the initiative of the Communist Union of Youth, mock seders were celebrated, and a parody of the Passover Hagadah recited, part of which read: "We were slaves of Capital, until October came, and led us out of the land of exploitation with a strong hand, and if it were not for October, we and our children would still be slaves." For the exclamation "Next year in Jerusalem!" was substituted "This year a Revolution here; next year—a world Revolution!"

Orthodoxy was not without its defenders, however, even in the most difficult years. As early as the end of 1922 the rabbis held a convention which appointed a permanent committee to look after the interests of the faith. In the spring of 1925 a seminary was opened in the town of Nevel (Vitebsk) for the training of rabbis and schochets. A year and a half later it had fifty-nine students and was refusing more for want of funds. There is now a shortage of rabbis, especially in the agricultural colonies. The plans of the rabbinical committee for 1927-1928 call for the expenditure of nearly half a million roubles (partly American money) for the support of religious schools and seminaries.

According to a recent report of the committee, it maintains relations with some 400 congregations. The old kehillahs, which ministered to the spiritual needs of the communities, did not survive the Revolution, but their place did not long remain vacant. Several years after the formal abolition of the kehillahs in 1919, religious communities were reconstituted on a new basis. Soviet law now recognizes "groups of believers" with a minimum membership of twenty, and "religious societies" with a minimum membership of fifty (Decree of April 15, 1923). They have the use of houses of prayer (which have been nationalized) and ritual objects, may elect officers, appoint ministers, hold conventions, and collect voluntary contributions for the maintenance of the buildings used. But they do not constitute a juridical person, cannot own property, enter into contracts, or engage in business operations. They must register with the local Soviet, paying a rather high fee for the privilege, and the "religious societies" must also file with the authorities a set of by-laws. By September 1, 1926, there were in the Ukraine 1,003 registered Jewish congregations, with 137,000 members, and in the R. S. F. S. R. (Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic) there were on October 1, 1925, 418 congregations.

Congregations are required to confine their activities to purely religious

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matters. But where is the line to be drawn in the orthodox Jewish faith, which so permeates daily life? Fearing the influence of the clerical element, the authorities bar them from meddling with education and the care of the aged, sick and needy, insisting that this is the business of the proletarian State, and not of any private body, especially one hostile to the régime. The new religious associations, on their part, are inclined to slip back into the old ways and tread on forbidden ground. The Communists point with scorn and alarm to the fact that in some townlets separate congregations combine and seek to revive the cheder and the yeshiva, to establish a monopoly on yeast and candles, and to lay a tax on ritually slaughtered meat, thus virtually reviving the old "basket-tax."

A congress of the Jewish religious associations was scheduled for the fall of 1927, but was postponed. One of its aims was to restore the Central Bureau which had been abolished at the beginning of the Revolution. Not that there is complete unanimity among the faithful. Some congregations show a reform tendency. In Homel the members of one synagogue resolved to remove the curtain from the women's gallery, and for hygienic reasons to refrain from kissing the Torah. Yet modernism seems to be feeble and orthodoxy well able to hold its own. Indeed, the Communists point out with dismay that the attendance of the synagogues by the young people is on the increase, that Chassidic prayer meetings are being held in the very shadow of the Red Kremlin, and that in the city of Lenin on the High Holidays a revered *zaddik* holds grand receptions to which hundreds of the faithful flock from all over the country. Accordingly, they urge a renewed attack upon religion. This time it is to be chiefly a campaign of enlightenment, under the direction of specially trained propagandists, who will use civilized methods.

THE Communists found more effective means than jeers and arguments in their fight against the synagogue and all it stands for: they secularized the schools. A father may teach his son the tenets of the faith, or he may hire a tutor for the purpose, and as many as three children may be taught thus in a home atmosphere without infringement of the law. Not, however, until boys and girls reach the "age of discretion"—eighteen—are they allowed to receive religious instruction in the private schools organized for that purpose. This prohibition means not only that the Jewish creed is not taught in the schools, but also that Scripture and the language of Scripture are banned. Hebrew, otherwise proscribed as an engine of obscurantism, a well of chauvinistic corruption, a vehicle of insidious counter-revolution, is tolerated as a graduate study only on the theory that it is an intrinsic element of Yiddish. The language of the new Jewish culture is the spoken idiom of the masses, while Hebrew and all things Hebraic are in every way

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discouraged. Recently, however, a rabbinical periodical in Hebrew began publication with Government sanction.

The educational program sponsored by the Communists and carried out by the Government spelled the downfall of that pillar of Jewish life: the cheder. In this matter the Jewish Communists were not content to use the arm of the State. They appealed to public opinion and tried to impress the people with the fact that these schools were injurious to the minds and bodies of the children. To that end they staged public trials of the cheder. One such performance, which took place in Vitebsk in January, 1921, has been reported in full detail. This trial was based on an investigation of thirty-nine cheders, accommodating 1,358 pupils. They were found to be as objectionable as they had always been in Russia: veritable pig-sties in which the boys spent unconscionably long hours under masters ignorant of the rudiments of pedagogy. The verdict emphatically condemned the cheder as tending to produce a generation of mentally weak and spiritless human beings—in short, as representing counter-revolution in education. A number of cheders, however, still exist, if on a half-illegal footing, particularly in the more backward communities.

The cheders have been largely replaced by Government schools. These are wholly secular and permeated with the spirit of the new order. Since there are not enough of them to go around, perhaps half of the Jewish children get no book-learning. Where Yiddish is the mother-tongue of the group, the effort is to make it the language of instruction, since it is one of the basic principles of Soviet education that teaching should be done in the language that comes naturally to the pupils. To what extent the effort has been successful may be seen from the following figures. At the end of the school year 1926–27 there were over 1,400 schools, including both elementary and high school grades, in White Russia, the Ukraine and R. S. F. S. R. They accommodated over 118,000 pupils. Nearly half of all the Jewish children in White Russia and the Ukraine who get any schooling, and about one-fourth of that group in the R. S. F. S. R., have all their classes in Yiddish. The rest go to Russian, Ukrainian or White Russian schools. Yiddish is also the language used in 10 per cent of the 550 children's homes and in 16 per cent of the kindergartens in the Ukraine. The Jewish schools are attended by the children of the poor, the well-to-do preferring to send their young to the other schools. The Yiddish schools form an integral part of the Soviet educational system, and are wholly supported and zealously watched by the State. There is a central Jewish Bureau in the Commissariat of Education, and Jewish inspectors in the local bureaus.

The Jewish educational system includes also several trade, factory and agricultural schools, and hundreds of classes for adults in reading, writing and Communist civics. Eight normal schools train Yiddish teachers, yet

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competent pedagogues are still scarce. In the Ukraine and White Russia there is a vexing problem. The children must learn two languages in addition to Yiddish if they are to know both the local tongue and the lingua franca of the country, Russian. There are several Jewish preparatory schools attached to higher institutions of learning, and Jewish departments in the universities. There is also an agricultural school in one of the settlements and a Jewish Chair for the training of agronomists at the White Russian Agricultural Institute at Gorki. Party members preparing themselves for work among Jews get instruction at special Party schools and pursue graduate studies in the Jewish section of the Communist University for the Peoples of the West in Moscow.

The apparatus for the dissemination of knowledge among the Yiddish-speaking masses includes a considerable number of lending libraries and reading rooms. Before the war there were about 300 Jewish public libraries throughout the Empire. During the early years of the Revolution most of them shut their doors. At present, however, there are probably more libraries than in the old days, and the number of Jewish books in circulation has certainly increased. The largest collection is the Central Jewish State Library of Kiev, which bears the name of Morris Winchewsky, Russian-American poet and publicist, who is the father of Socialist literature in Yiddish. The tenth anniversary of the Revolution was marked by the opening at Odessa of a State Museum of Jewish culture named for "Grandfather" Mendele Mocher Seforim.

Crowning this educational edifice are several research institutions. The Jewish section of the Institute of White Russian Culture, which came into being in 1925, has already begun work on an academic dictionary of Yiddish, and the elaboration of terminology is being pushed forward. Plans are being laid for the establishment of a central institute to coördinate academic work done in Minsk and Kiev. These modest beginnings are looked on by some as the seed of an unprecedented type of Jewish learning. It will not be narrowly racial, pietistic and retrospective, but rather encyclopedic in scope, practical in outlook, and frankly serving the interests of the new dispensation.

The new schools need new textbooks. The demand is met by both official and semi-official publishing agencies. A juvenile literature is rising, and there are also manuals of practical instruction for adults as well as many socio-political pamphlets. Imaginative literature, aside from translations, plays a relatively small part. By 1927 there were six Yiddish dailies in the Union, and a number of periodicals. One of the several weeklies is issued for the settlers by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine. The monthlies include an educational journal and a general review, *The Red World*, which is issued by the Ukrainian State Publishing Board.

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V

FROM the first the authorities have given every encouragement to dramatic art, partly in the hope that the playhouses would take the place of the prayer-houses. The Jewish stage, which under the old régime had dragged out a mean, anemic, threatened existence, gained health with the new era, and in spite of all manner of obstacles developed into a living art. In 1919, in starving Petrograd, a group of Jewish actors came together under the vigorous direction of A. M. Granovsky and established a repertory company. It was housed in what had been the theater of Suvorin, a friend of Chekhov's and a notorious Jew-baiter. Some wag bandaged the eyes of Suvorin's bust lest he see the ignominy that had befallen his playhouse. Shortly after they moved to Moscow, which held a sufficiently large Jewish contingent to support the venture. Here it was incorporated into the system of Government-supported theaters, and became the Jewish State Theater, better known as the Jewish Kamerny (chamber, that is, intimate) Theater. It is in the very van of theatrical progress. Like other stages that express the spirit of the Revolution, it aims at disturbing, rather than soothing, the audience. It has a predilection for the grotesque and holds up to Jewish life the distorting mirror of caricature. Not that it confines itself to racial subjects. An early production was Maeterlinck's *The Blind*, and the plans for the season of 1927–28 included a drama dealing with the uprising of colored slaves in an English colony. This is one sign of the shift from the old introverted, self-conscious attitude to a healthier, more outward-looking point of view.

The Ukraine, too, has more recently achieved a Jewish State Theater which, like that of Moscow, seeks to act as the mouthpiece of the new era, and in a large sense to be an instrument of Communist education. It is intent on carving out its own way, but is still in the experimental stage. A Jewish theater also flourishes in Minsk, where it operates under the auspices of the White Russian Republic. Indeed, there is scarcely a Jewish settlement without some little playhouse, even if it is a mere barn, where weekly or fortnightly performances are given. Last year the group in the Moscow Workers' Club gave a playlet based on the life of the Jewish colonists. For a good many years a company of Jewish actors, established in Moscow under the name of Habimah, gave performances, not in the vernacular, but in the language of the Prophets. The story of the Habimah, which goes back to 1912, is one of a confraternity of artists dedicated to an ideal at once esthetic and national in a spirit that can only be described as religious. Though for a while they had some official support, they had to fight not only the indifference of a callous public, but also the hostility of a Government which holds Hebrew suspect as the language of fanaticism and reaction.

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Perhaps by way of a temporary retreat, they have recently withdrawn from the land of the Soviets.

The stage has the support of some of the best workers in music and painting. So far these arts, unlike that of the theater, have failed to be quickened by the Revolution. Before the upheaval there were several gifted painters whose work was fed by Jewish experience, and was also, in varying degrees, the expression of it. One thinks of Chagall, Altman, Lissitzky. The Revolution drew some of these men away from Jewish themes, but this seems to have been only a temporary diversion. A telling symptom is the recent interest in traditional folk-art, such as mural ornament in synagogues, book decoration and the like. As Jewish culture gains strength, the arts are bound to assert themselves.

Literature shows considerable vitality. Needless to say, Yiddish is its medium, neo-Hebrew literature being virtually extinct. The speech of the masses is undergoing farreaching changes. The "jargon," the low dialect, has achieved the status of an official tongue. A vernacular, once confined to the intimacies of the home and the crudities of the market place, it is now being employed in the Government office and the law court. Upon the free, expansive, picturesque language of old wives' tales, of melodrama, of genre comedy, an unwonted discipline is imposed: it has to adapt itself to the precise requirements of instruction and even of scholarly research. The forced growth of the language involves the hasty assimilation of Russian phrasing, which Yiddish will probably disgorge in the end. Yet the expansion of the scope of the language, and the new dignity it has taken on, cannot but benefit imaginative writing.

In the beginning a host of verse writers arose to celebrate the Revolution. The simplicity, the affirming spirit, the joyous mood of their best work is in contrast to the cerebral, negative quality and the minor tone that prevailed before the Revolution, and are, indeed, the hallmark of the new poetry. As time went on, prose came to the fore, partly in response to the demand of the critics that the young men cease writing ebullient lyrics and devote themselves to realistic if partisan portrayals of daily life. Much of the output is merely poor imitation of current Russian fiction. Like their Russian confrères, some of the Jewish writers are organized for the purpose not only of protecting their interests and improving their work, but also in order to serve the proletarian public by means of readings, lectures and the like. The State offers a subsidy of fifty roubles a month to a few chosen authors.

The social upheaval was far less destructive to Jewish literature than it was to Russian, since the Yiddish authors had always written not for the doomed middle class, but for the common people. For the same reason the inheritance from the literary past has for the most part been accepted by

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the younger generation of writers. The older men are accorded homage, steadily reprinted and zealously studied. The fact that Yiddish literature has always been a literature of the poor, the untutored, the lowly, inclines the Communists to be respectful to the earliest Jewish authors. But although the past is reverenced, there is a strong feeling that literature, together with the other arts, stands on the threshold of a new era.

VI

ANY speculation as to what the future holds for the Jewish people inevitably revolves around the Hamletic query: to be or not to be? Are the Jews of the Soviet States on their way to assimilation, or not? Setting aside ultimate destinies and taking a short view of the question, it is possible to attempt an answer without leaving the sober factual plane upon which this study has been conducted.

It might appear that the new order has strengthened some old, and brought into play some new forces hostile to the preservation of the Jewish group identity. In weakening the religious regimen, which for so long walled in the masses and buttressed their separatism, the Revolution has laid them open to the disintegrating influences which always threaten a minority. Yet the vitality of the religious tradition should not be underestimated and, in any event, its decay is likely to be a slow, interrupted affair. Again, it is argued, the removal of the residential disability should lead to a gradual abandonment of the old congested centers and an eventual absorption by the Russian sea of the drop that is Jewry, and indeed, as has been seen, some movement of the population from the Pale into the interior has already taken place. New backgrounds, new interests, new occupations, are likely to make for the acceptance of new standards. It is conceivable that the isolated communities in such places as the Volga cities may become submerged within a few generations. It is, however, unreasonable to expect that the bulk of the Jewish people will pull up stakes and scatter all over the country, thus courting assimilation. Economic and social factors make for a cohesion within the race which renders such an eventuality an uncertain and remote possibility.

Indeed, the emphasis laid by the new dispensation on class rather than national differences has until now not been as efficacious in breaking down the division between Jew and Gentile as might be supposed. The Revolution did foster the spirit of brotherhood, but could not long sustain it, and where the civil war was fought anti-Jewish feeling raged with unprecedented violence. This feeling has since lost its edge, and has taken on the shape that anti-Semitism assumes in the West. On the whole, the traffic with Gentiles has probably increased, particularly among the young people. There is talk of a growing number of mixed marriages and of a more tolerant

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attitude toward them, but in 1924 fully 96 per cent of the Jewish males married within their race, a proportion that has probably not altered much in the subsequent years. According to the last census (December 17, 1926), 712,000 persons designating themselves as Jews offered languages other than Yiddish as their mother-tongue. Thus, 27 per cent of the Jews of the Union have undergone linguistic assimilation. The percentage is high, but it does not exceed that of the White Russians in the same situation.

The truth is that even under the new régime the influences working for Jewish distinctiveness more than counterbalance and indeed outweigh the influences working in the opposite direction. It has been pointed out that the emancipation of the formerly subject nationalities is a basic principle of the new order. Every ethnic group is not only permitted but encouraged to lead its own life, and to develop whatever cultural potentialities it may possess, provided, of course, that the Communist scheme of things is not interfered with. An air so favorable to all minor, local civilizations is a healthy one for Jewish nationalism. The logic of the situation at present makes for separatism. The Jews are concentrated in the Ukraine and in White Russia, where the dominant races are jealous of their newly discovered national identity. Consequently, the adoption of the elements of Russian culture, which is what Jewish assimilation would mean at present, would, to put it mildly, rub the natives the wrong way. The only reasonable, politic, dignified stand for the Jews to take is that they are a separate and distinct cultural entity.

As a matter of fact, assimilation is frowned upon on all sides. Even the Communists, while vehemently rejecting anything that smacks of a nationalist policy in the European political sense, are working toward the consolidation of the Jewish nationality. True, Marx denied that the term nation could properly be applied to Jewry, and Lenin, who agreed with him, believed that the race would disappear in a free Russia, a contingency that in no way disturbed him. There are some Communists of Jewish birth who, sharing these views, would be content to see their people swallowed up. The Jews, runs the argument, not being a nation in the strict Marxian sense, are not the object of the Soviet national policy. On the other hand, there are those who would preserve the group at all costs. The official policy of the Party holds to neither point of view. It subordinates the whole issue to the consideration of what will best serve the interests of the new order. It would encourage the Jews to enter the mines and the factories, and if that means that they are to be lost in an alien environment, no matter. At the same time, the assimilationist program is definitely rejected. "The greatest danger to our revolutionary socialist work," said a prominent leader at the seventh All-Union Conference of the Jewish Sections of the Young Communist League, "would be to break away from the masses, and that is what

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assimilation would lead to." The Bolsheviks doubt the reality of a Jewish nation on a world-wide scale, but they believe that the portion of the race that lives within the borders of the Union may achieve the status of a national entity with a territorial basis. As has already been indicated, such a consolidation they believe to be useful to the Cause and therefore desirable.

Hence the demand for an autonomous territory or territories in the program of the Jewish sections of the Communist Party. Hence, by the same token, the energetic support of the land movement, considered as a long step toward the goal. On November 17, 1926, Kalinin, President of the Union, made a speech at the Moscow conference of the Ozet. Economic necessity, he allowed, impelled the movement to the land. But there was back of it, he said, "a powerful, unconscious mass phenomenon"—a will on the part of the Jewish masses to preserve their national identity. Only if hundreds of thousands of Jews come to make up a Jewish peasantry, he argued, can the people continue to be, as they should, a distinct nation. So that, when the townsman settles on the land, he is the bearer of a "national mission." His words were received with applause.

THE Jewish Soviet Republic envisaged by the orthodox Communists differs fundamentally from Herzl's polity in Zion, as well as from the territorialists' homeland. It is not intended to furnish the Jewish people throughout the world with the political life that it has lacked for so long. Nor is it intended to become the seat of the putative civilization of the race. It contributes little to the solution of the Jewish problem on a world scale, but it would afford Russian Jewry a basis for a full national life.

But, in any case, the Jewish republic is a matter of the future. For the present, the State extends to the Jewish masses what it offers to the other minorities: Government institutions using their own language, and instruction entirely in their own tongue. In spite of the fact that everything relating to religion is excluded from the schools, the children who pass through them are imbued with the Jewish spirit. The racial experience is transmitted to them through the Yiddish writers on whom they are brought up, and whose language they use not only at home but also in the classroom.

Unless all signs fail, the future will witness the rise of a distinct Jewish culture on Russian soil. It is not likely to find a rival except perhaps in the Palestinian center which is now forming. The present hostility on the part of Soviet Jewish leadership toward Hebrew and all it stands for is probably a passing phase, and the ancient tongue, which is, after all, an integral part of Yiddish, may in the end find its place in the Jewish scheme of things. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the years will widen the distance between the two nodes of Jewish life: one, Oriental, exclusively Hebraic, steeped in an essentially religious tradition, probably conservative; the other, aggressive,

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eclectic, secular, speaking a plebeian language born in the Western Diaspora. Whether this will mean an irreparable schism, so that all those to whom their racial heritage is a living thing will gravitate to one of the two poles, Jerusalem or Moscow, or whether the two polities will complement each other, must remain a matter for speculation.

In concluding it may be pertinent to contrast the effect of the Russian upheaval upon Jewry with that of the other great crisis which occurred in Western Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. The Government set up by the French Revolution accorded the Jews full civic rights. But they were emancipated not as a peculiar extra-territorial nationality, entitled to a group life of its own, but rather as citizens of France who professed a strange faith. Curiously enough, this view of the nature of Judaism struck root and flourished among the Jews of the West. The Grand Sanhedrin convoked by Napoleon decreed flatly that the Jews did not constitute a nation. It is perhaps too early to judge the results of the Russian Revolution, but it would seem that its chief effect upon the Jewish people within its sphere of influence is to have freed them not merely as individuals but as a group having the potentialities of nationhood.

Involvement

By Edward Sapir

WHILE Aaron pontificates, brother of Moses,
And Cotton Mather storms with word of the Lord,
Their progeny, sadly religion-bored,
The lovely waywardness of love discloses.
For he is rapt in the yellow filmy hair
And finds in blue eyes what he might in brown,
And she is never tired of stroking down
His dark hair with a slow and graceful care.

Now were there God to pull the souls apart
That rushed together from the passionate heart
All through the unity of clinging flesh,
Then were it hard for Him to disenmesh
Spirit from spirit and reassign to each
The embodiment the genealogies teach.

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